DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 235 447 CG 016 983

AUTHOR Baker, Stanley, B.; And Others
TITLE Counselors Sharing Their Skills with a Wider Audience.
PUB DATE 22 Mar 83
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (Washington, DC, March 20-23, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Cognitive Style; *Communication Skills; *Counseling Techniques; Counselor Role; *Family Problems; Humanistic Education; Individual Development; Intervention; Prevention; Program Descriptions; Psychoeducational Clinics; School Counselors; Secondary Education; *Self Concept; *Skill Development; *Student Teacher Relationship; Underachievement

ABSTRACT

This presentation describes three preventive and skill building counseling programs implemented by school counselors in an attempt to share their skills beyond the traditional counseling-on-demand role. The Counselor-Directed Relationship Enhancement Training of Underachieving, Poorly Communicating Students and their Teachers program matched in dyads underachieving students, grades 8-12, and teachers to enhance communication skills. A modified version of the Guerney Relationship Enhancement (RE) training program was used in eight 45 minute sessions. Communication skills, e.g., empathy, expression, discourse facilitation, and problem solving were practiced with partners. Modest gains and trends favoring RE dyads were reported. The Helping Youth from Changing Families program placed male and female students from changing families, grades 7-9, in 5-10 member structured counseling groups. Groups met for twelve 45 minute sessions over 3 months. Twenty-eight discussion topics, e.g., personal reaction to loss, "Santa Claus" parents, and visitations, were systematically introduced by the counselor. An attitude measure showed students preferred the structured approach over counseling-on-demand. The Cognitive Restructuring as a Primary Prevention Strategy program taught male and female ninth graders, in four 45 minute sessions, to identify self-defeating thoughts and to replace those thoughts with self-improving ones. The program participants showed increases in self-concept. (BL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED235447

COUNSELORS SHARING THEIR SKILLS WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE

Stanley B. Baker

The Pennsylvania State University

Thomas G. Rocks

Waynesboro, Pennsylvania Area Schools

John T. Sheridan

State College, Pennsylvania Area Schools

Ronald N. Thomas

Tyrone, Pennsylvania Area Schools

CG 016983

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Stanley B. Baker

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A program presented at the Annual Convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, DC, March 22, 1983.

Counselors Sharing Their Skills With a Wider Audience

Much has been written about encouraging counselors to be psychoeducators through implementation of primary prevention goals and programs (e.g., Authier, Gustafson, Guerney, & Kasdorf, 1975; Carroll, 1973, Cottingham, 1973; Cowen, 1977; Ivey, 1977; Ivey & Leppaluoto, 1975). These writers view counseling as an important function but only a singular aspect of a broader role for counselors. In their view, the broader view includes an emphasis on teaching or training skills, curriculum development, and consultation. Consequently, counselors' services are to be rendered to the widest possible audience, including families, associational groups, communities, and institutions.

> The psychoeducator model . . . is . . . an all inclusive model of counseling in which the helping function is seen in terms of client dissatisfaction or ambition which leads to goal setting which, in turn, leads to skill teaching. The final outcome is client satisfaction or goal achievement (Baker, 1981, p. 30).

Thus, the psychoeducator model for counseling is one wherein counselors view their role, in part, as sharing their skills with a large audience of people in order to help them to achieve mutually derived human development goals. Implementation of this model most certainly involves counselors in preventive activities.

The three programs described in this presentation were implemented by school counselors who gained firsthand experience of the rewards and problems associated with sharing their skills with others. Each program has unique and common characteristics. Brief descriptions of the programs follow. The counselors who were involved will share their insights during the presentation.

Counselor-Directed Relationship Enhancement Training of Underachieving, Poorly Communicating Students and Their Teachers (T. G. Rocks)

Goal. To alleviate underachievement through counselor-directed interpersonal communications skills training with dyads of teachers and their underachieving, poorly communicating students.

Trainees. Male and female students ranging from grades 8 through 12 and the teachers who nominated them were paired into dyads for counselor-led interpersonal communication skills training.

Training program. A modified version of Guerney's (1977) Relationship Enhancement training program was used wherein each dyad received eight 45-minute counselor-led training sessions in which they practiced empathic listening, expressive, discursive, facilitative, and problem-solving skills with their partners. The RE training program is sytematically designed, and the skills are cumulative, skills presented later building on those learned earlier.

Empirical evaluation. An experimental study was conducted in order to assess the effects of the modified RE training on measures of academic achievement, classroom behavior, attendance, and attitude toward school. Modest gains and trends favored the RE dyadic program.

Helping Youth from Changing Families Through Structured Group Counseling (J. T. Sheridan)

Trainees. Male and female seventh, eighth, and ninth graders from changing families who responded to counselor "soft-sell" recruitment and received parent or guardian approval were assigned to small structured counseling groups (i.e., 5-10 members with a counselor-leader). Prior to assignments, volunteers were screened through a self-report checklist in order to eliminate those whose problems were already so debilitating that extensive personality change appeared to be required.

Training program. The structured group counseling methods were similar to classical group counseling procedures. The counselors in this case, however, systematically introduced discussion topics that had been deemed important through previous clinical experiences and a review of the professional literature. The groups met for twelve 45-minute weekly sessions over a 3 1/2 month time span, covering 28 counselor-suggested topics (e.g., phases of personal reaction to loss of significant

others, social problems related to being in a changing family, "Santa Claus" parents, visitations, custody, financial change in the family, and "step-people").

Empirical evaluation. Results of an experimental study to assess the effects of structured group counseling on attitudes toward the groups, knowledge of problems of changing families, behavioral referrals, academic performance, self-concept, and behavior at home led to inconclusive results on all measures save attitude toward the treatment when comparisons were made with an explicit bibliotherapy treatment and a counseling-on-demand control condition. Significant results on the attitude measure indicate that both the structured group counseling and explicit bibliotherapy programs were preferred over the traditional counseling-on-demand approach.

Cognitive Restructuring as a Primary Prevention Strategy (R. N. Thomas)

Goal. To help youth cope with future stressful situations by providing a counselor-led cognitive restructuring skills training program.

Trainees. Male and female ninth graders assigned to a required secondary school guidance class.

Training program. The required guidance classes met weekly for 45 minutes, and various guidance units were offered throughout the year. Entitled Cleaning Up Our Thinking, the cognitive restructuring unit had a trainer-trainee atmosphere. During four 45-minute sessions, the counselor-trainer explained the process and rationale behind cognitive restructuring, helped trainees to identify their own self-defeating thoughts, taught them how to use incompatible self-improving thoughts, and provided an in vivo homework assignment (Baker, Thomas, & Munson, in press).

Empirical evaluation. Results of a quasi-experimental study were mixed. The cognitive restructuring program was equal to a structured discussion control condition on a measure of trainee attitudes toward the treatment on conclusion of the programs. On the other hand, the structured group discussion trainees experienced a significantly greater increase in measured self-concept.

Concluding Thoughts

The programs described above are suggestive. Each presents a different way for counselors to share their skills with a larger audience. The empirical studies do not, however, present unequivocal evidence of superiority for these programs. At best, they are indicative of a need to give much thought to the "share-our-skills" philosophy. That is the purpose of this presentation. By sharing their experiences and observations, the counselors involved in the programs included in this presentation desire to help others in their continuing effort to develop individual and universal counseling models through planning, testing, sharing and continuous dialogue.

References

Authier, J., Gustafson, K., Guerney, B., & Kasdorf, J. The psychological practitioner as a teacher: A theoretical historical and practical review. Counseling Psychologist, 1975, 5(2), 31-50.

Baker, S. B. School counselor's handbook: A guide for professional growth and development. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1981.

Baker, S. B., Thomas, R. N., & Munson, W. Effects of cognitive restructuring and structured group discussion on primary prevention strategies. School Counselor, in press.

Carroll, M. R. The regeneration of guidance. School Counselor, 1973, 20, 355-360.

Cottingham, H. F. Psychological education, the guidance function, and the school counselor. School Counselor, 1973, 20, 40-45.

Cowen, E. L. Baby steps toward primary prevention. American Journal of Community Psychology, 1977, 5, 1-23.

Guerney, B. G., Jr. Relationship enhancement: Skill-training programs for therapy, problem prevention, and enrichment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Ivey, A. E. Counseling psychology: The psychoeducator model. Counseling Psychologist, 1977, 7, 61-63.

Ivey, A. E., & Leppaluoto, J. R. Changes ahead! Implications of the Vail Conference. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1975, 53, 747-752.